

Skua we had caught on the beach at Chumbe Island, about 12 km south-southwest of Zanzibar town, which represented the first record of the species for Tanzania (Koehler & Koehler 1993).

A subadult light, or barred morph Arctic Skua was washed ashore on 14 March 1994 on Chumbe Island following a heavy storm. It was released after being photographed by Ilona Riehl and Günther Bludszweit. The photographs show an individual probably in its third calendar year and moulting from the second immature non-breeding to breeding plumage. Primaries 1–8, many wing coverts and rectrices 1 and 2 are dark brown and new, the sharply pointed central pair of rectrices protruding 30–40 mm beyond the old outermost one. All secondaries were old. According to Urban *et al.* (1986) this might represent the first record of Arctic Skua for Tanzania.

While we are not completely sure of the ageing criteria of the Pomarine Skua seen on 19 January, the two immature skuas can be presumed to have been going to spend the summer as non-breeders in the Indian Ocean as virtually only adults are seen on spring migration off Eilat, Israel (Meininger & Sorensen 1986).

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The birds of Ajai's Game Reserve, Uganda: a first ornithological survey

A biological assessment of Ajai's Game Reserve, central West Nile Region, was undertaken by Frontier-Uganda, a scientific collaboration between the UK-based Society for Environmental Exploration and the Uganda Game Department. An ornithological survey, carried out between 15 October and 12 December 1993 identified 115 species from 40 families.

Study area

Ajai's Game Reserve (2°45'–3°00'N, 31°05'–31°25'E) covers 158 km². The northern and eastern areas are predominantly low-altitude (<700 m) wooded savanna grading to permanent swamp. In the south of the reserve a ridge (to 850 m) rises out of wooded savanna, supporting dry grassland on its northeastern slope. Two tributaries of the River Nile flow through the reserve feeding a range of wetland habitats which include 34 km² of permanent papyrus swamp. Human encroachment, an increasing problem, has led to about 6 per cent of the reserve being under cultivation.

Methods

Bird observations were made in five broad vegetation types occurring within the reserve: wooded savanna, riverine woodland, papyrus swamp, swamp grassland and woodland (Langdale-Brown *et al.* 1964). On two occasions the swamp grassland between the eastern boundary of the reserve and Rhino Camp, a small town on the River Nile, was visited.

Species identification was by visual observations supported for some species by the recognition of calls. Mist-netting was not carried out. Once determined, each vegetation type was sampled on foot. These bird walks of between 6 and 8 km on average, were carried out on a daily basis between 07:00–10:30 and between 17:30–18:30 at least three times each week, though all opportunistic sightings were also recorded. Fifty-four per cent of observations were made in wooded savanna, and almost 40 per cent made in the wetland habitats of papyrus swamp, swamp grassland and riverine and riverine woodland. Approximately half of the study time was spent in the wooded savanna, the most extensive vegetation type in the reserve. Access to the papyrus swamp was limited, though vantage points such as bridges were used during the study.

Results

A total of 115 species were recorded between 22 October and 5 December 1993. Species abundance was higher in transitional zones between the five distinct habitats, with diversity enhanced in wetland areas. Cultivation also had a positive effect on the variety of species.

Table 1. *Birds of Ajai's Game Reserve, 22 October–5 December 1993*

Key: Habitat type: AT: all types, PS: papyrus swamp, RW: riverine woodland, WS: wooded savanna, SG: swamp grassland, RC: Rhino Camp, SFG: seasonally flooded grassland, SFWG: seasonally flooded wooded grassland, R: riverine, SWS: swampy wooded savanna, W: woodland, HH: human habitation. **Frequency:** 1: seen daily, 2: seen at least once a week, 3: seen at least three times during the study

Species	habitat	frequency
White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	PS	3
Long-tailed Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	PS	3
Greater Cormorant <i>P. carbo</i>	PS	2
Dwarf Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sturmii</i>	PS	2
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	SG, RC	2
Goliath Heron <i>A. goliath</i>	PS	3
Black-headed Heron <i>A. melanocephala</i>	SG, RC	2
Purple Heron <i>A. purpurea</i>	PS	3
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	PS	3
Green-backed Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	PS	2
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	RW	3
Hamerkop <i>Scopus umbretta</i>	RW	2
Open-billed Stork <i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	RW	1
Abdim's Stork <i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	WS	3
Woolly-necked Stork <i>C. episcopus</i>	SFG	3

Species	habitat	frequency
Saddle-billed Stork <i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	PS	3
Marabou Stork <i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	AT	2
Hadada Ibis <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	WS	2
Lappet-faced Vulture <i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	RW	3
African Harrier Hawk <i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	WS	3
Bateleur <i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	WS	1
Wahlberg's Eagle <i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	WS	3
Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	WS	3
Long-crested Eagle <i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	WS	2
Gabar Goshawk <i>Melierax gabar</i>	WS	3
Dark Chanting Goshawk <i>M. metabates</i>	WS	1
Martial Eagle <i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	WS	2
Fish Eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	RW	2
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	AT	1
Black-shouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	WS, RC	3
Helmeted Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	WS	1
Crowned Crane <i>Balearica pavonina</i>	SG	3
Black Crane <i>Limnocolox flavirostra</i>	PS	2
Jacana <i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	SG, RC	3
Wattled Plover <i>Vanellus senegallus</i>	WS	2
Black-headed Plover <i>V. tectus</i>	SG	2
Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>	WS	3
Ring-necked Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	WS	1
Black-billed Wood Dove <i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>	WS	2
Green Pigeon <i>Treron australis</i>	WS	1
Brown Parrot <i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>	WS	1
Bare-faced Go-away-bird <i>Corythaixoides personata</i>	WS	2
Eastern Grey Plantain-eater <i>Crinifer zonurus</i>	AT	1
White-crested Turaco <i>Tauraco leucocephalus</i>	RW	3
Levaillant's Cuckoo <i>Clamator levaillantii</i>	WS	3
Blue-headed Coucal <i>Centropus monachus</i>	WS	3
Senegal Coucal <i>C. senegalensis</i>	WS	2
White-browed Coucal <i>C. superciliosus</i>	WS	1
Pearl-spotted Owllet <i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	RW	3
Pel's Fishing Owl <i>Scotopelia peli</i>	R, PS	3
Palm Swift <i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	WS	1
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	WS	1
Blue-naped Mousebird <i>Urocolius macrourus</i>	WS	1
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	R	3
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Alcedo cristata</i>	R	1
Striped Kingfisher <i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	SWS	2
Chestnut-bellied Kingfisher <i>H. leucocephala</i>	RW	2
Woodland Kingfisher <i>H. senegalensis</i>	WS	2
Red-throated Bee-eater <i>Merops bulocki</i>	RW	2
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater <i>M. hirundineus</i>	WS	2
Little Bee-eater <i>M. pusillus</i>	SG	3
Abyssinian Roller <i>Coracias abyssinica</i>	S, WS	3
Lilac-breasted Roller <i>C. caudata</i>	WS	3
Green Wood Hoopoe <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	W	3
Red-billed Hornbill <i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	WS	3
Grey Hornbill <i>T. nasutus</i>	WS	1
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill <i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>	WS	2

Species	habitat	frequency
Double-toothed Barbet <i>Lybius bidentatus</i>	WS	2
Spotted-flanked Barbet <i>L. lacrymosus</i>	WS	3
White-headed Barbet <i>L. leucocephalus</i>	WS	3
Black-throated Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	WS	3
Cardinal Woodpecker <i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	RW	2
Grey Woodpecker <i>Mesopicos goertae</i>	RW	2
Bearded Woodpecker <i>Thripias namaquus</i>	RW	3
Wire-tailed Swallow <i>Hirundo smithii</i>	WS	2
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	WS	2
Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	AT	1
Pied Crow <i>Corvus albus</i>	HH	1
Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	AT	2
White-browed Robin Chat <i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	WS	3
Red-capped Robin Chat <i>C. natalensis</i>	WS	1
Yellow-bellied Eremomela <i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>	WS	3
Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>	WS	3
Wattle-eye <i>Platysteira cyanea</i>	RW	3
Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	RW	2
Black-headed Gonolek <i>Laniarius barbarus</i>	WS, RW	1
Black-headed Tchagra <i>Tchagra senegala</i>	WS	3
Fiscal Shrike <i>Lanius collaris</i>	WS	1
Grey-backed Fiscal <i>L. excubitorius</i>	WS	1
White-crowned Shrike <i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>	WS	2
Helmet Shrike <i>Prionops plumata</i>	WS	2
Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis chalcurus</i>	WS	1
Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling <i>L. chloropterus</i>	WS	3
Purple Glossy Starling <i>L. purpureus</i>	WS	2
Rüppell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling <i>L. purpuropterus</i>	WS	1
Olive-bellied Sunbird <i>Nectarinia chloropygia</i>	WS	3
Red-chested Sunbird <i>N. erythroceria</i>	SG	3
Grosbeak Weaver <i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>	PS	3
Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	WS	3
Parasitic Weaver <i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>	RW	3
Northern Red Bishop <i>Euplectes franciscanus</i>	WS	1
Black-winged Red Bishop <i>E. hordeaceus</i>	WS	3
Red-headed Malimbe <i>Malimbus rubricollis</i>	WS	3
Black-headed Weaver <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	R	2
Masked Weaver <i>P. intermedius</i>	AT	1
Yellow-backed Weaver <i>P. melanocephalus</i>	PS	2
Spectacled Weaver <i>P. ocularis</i>	R	2
Slender-billed Weaver <i>P. pelzelni</i>	RW	3
White-browed Sparrow Weaver <i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	WS	1
Pin-tailed Whydah <i>Vidua macroura</i>	WS	1
Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	WS	3
African Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	RW	2
Red-billed Firefinch <i>L. senegala</i>	WS	2
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu <i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	AT	1
Black and White Mannikin <i>Lonchura bicolor</i>	WS	3

Additional notes on two uncommon species

Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*

One was seen on two occasions from a bridge in papyrus swamp. On the first sighting (12 November, 18:30–18:45) the bird was flying about 10 m up from a small patch of riverine woodland over the river and swamp to a patch of forest approximately 40 m from the river. It was then watched sitting on an open branch about 7 m above the ground until the light was lost. On the second occasion (14 November, 17:30–17:45) the owl was flying between 5–7 m above the swamp carrying prey with both feet. The prey was an object about 15 cm long and was not recognizable as a fish. The bird flew to another open branch in the same patch of riverine woodland fringing the papyrus swamp, about 50 m from the observers. The bird waited on this branch for about 10 min with its back towards us, though its head was turned to face us. The arrival of other people on the bridge disturbed the owl which turned its body round to face us for about a minute before flying off into dense *Phoenix reclinata* swamp forest. A full description has been lodged with the EANHS OS-c. Ajai's would appear to be the third locality for this species in Uganda (Britton 1980, Ash *et al.* 1991).

Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus*

One was observed twice in one day in wooded savanna in the central eastern part of the reserve (27 October). The only previous record (unpublished) was of one seen at Inde (a village within the reserve) in May 1969.

Discussion

The 115 species recorded is a minimum estimate as species seen but not positively identified have been omitted. Further species of nightjars, swallows, warblers and sunbirds, for example, can be expected with more observation. Local Game Department staff stated that the Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* was found in the reserve.

The association of vegetation types, particularly wetland habitats, provides a suitable environment for a rich and varied bird population. Originally established as a white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* sanctuary, there is strong local feeling that, with the extinction of this species, the reserve serves no purpose and should be turned over to agriculture. The protected status of Ajai's, if revoked or reduced in the proposed review of Uganda's protected area system, should provide for the preservation of a mosaic of swamp, riverine woodland and wooded savanna as refugia amidst areas of increasing human influence.

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Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx mechowi* and Papyrus Canary *Serinus koliensis*: two additions to the Tanzania list

During atlas fieldwork in Kagera Region, northwest Tanzania, two species were found that had not previously been identified in the country.

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx mechowi*

A bird was resident around our camp in Minziro Forest Reserve (1°07'S, 31°30'E) from 16 to 23 November 1993. Its call was initially noticed by Bro A. Grawehr who likened it to that of the Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* with which he is familiar in southern Tanzania. It became a familiar call around the camp, especially in the early mornings and late afternoons. The bird was seen several times but we were aware of the difficulties in separating this species from the Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus* in the field. Several of the party were familiar with the Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *C. montanus* in the field and in the hand.

On 21 November the bird was finally caught in a mist net placed deliberately close to the forest edge where it had been seen. On 26 and 27 November further birds were caught at Kikuru Forest Reserve some 14 km east of Minziro. The relevant mensural data (g and mm) are as follows:

<u>Bird No.</u>	<u>mass</u>	<u>wing</u>	<u>bill</u>	<u>tarsus</u>	<u>tail</u>
1	51.6	146	24.5	20.2	205
2	59	150	24.2	20.4	200
3	47	140	23.8	–	200

The species is known from adjacent forest areas in Uganda. These records are not, therefore, significant extensions of range.

Papyrus Canary *Serinus koliensis*

Two birds were mist-netted along the edge of a papyrus swamp near Katera village (1°20'S, 30°40'E) on 1 December 1993. The site was in the vicinity of Kagera Swamp and only 2 km from the Rwandan border. The species is known from the Kagera Swamp in Rwanda and is not, therefore, a significant extension of range.